

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BERN 01768 191243Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 H-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 ACDA-12 /051 W  
-----079196 191308Z /53

P R 191140Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6108  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS BERN 1768

USICA FOR PGM/RC

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: MPOL, SZ  
SUBJ: SWISS PRESS ON PRESIDENT'S NEUTRON BOMB DECISION

1. SUMMARY: IN PAST WEEK SWISS PRESS COVERAGE OF  
PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO POSTPONE NEUTRON BOMB (NB)  
PRODUCTION HAS CONCENTRATED ON REPORTS OUT OF WASHING-  
TON AND EUROPE, PARTICULARLY CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR DEPLOYMENT. EDITORIAL  
COMMENT WAS FAVORABLE ON BALANCE; CALLED FOR REALISM  
ABOUT NB DEPLOYMENT, EUROPEAN DEFENSE AND DISARMAMENT  
TALKS. SOME EDITORIALISTS STATED THEY BELIEVED  
PRESIDENT'S PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO STRENGTHEN HIS  
BARGAINING POSITION WITH SOVIETS. END SUMMARY.

2. ARTICLES IN SEVERAL PAPERS REFLECTED US AND  
EUROPEAN PRESS CRITICISM THAT DECISION SHOWED US  
ADMINISTRATION'S INCAPACITY ADOPT AND FOLLOW COHERENT  
GLOBAL POLICY, AND IN VIEW OF ABANDONMENT B-1 BOMBER  
SHOWED WEAKNESS VIS-A-VIS SOVIETS TO DETRIMENT  
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BERN 01768 191243Z

EUROPEAN DEFENSE. HOWEVER, "DER BUND" STRESSED DIFFICULTY  
DEMOCRACIES HAVE IN TAKING NEUTRON DECISION IN FACE  
OF PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICULARLY AFTER US EXPERIENCE  
WITH VIETNAM AND WATERGATE; SAID SOVIETS COULD TAKE  
SECRET DECISION TO PRODUCE AND DEPLOY WITHOUT PUBLIC  
REACTION.

3. "AGEFI" EDITORIAL EMPHASIZED NB DECISION WAS DROP THAT CAUSED FULL VASE OF US BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH FRG TO OVERFLOW, BUT WARNED THAT EUROPEAN CUSTOMS UNION IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN NUCLEAR UMBRELLA. "DER BUND" ALSO CALLED FOR REALISM. SAID NATO'S FEDERAL STRUCTURE MAKES FRICTION INEVITABLE. SAID NB DECISION IN CONTEXT OF SECY VANCE'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PROGRAM AND US NON-PROLIFERATION ACT REFLECTS FAVORABLY ON PRESIDENT'S INTENTIONS. ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP STYLE OF MAKING SUDDEN LEAPS UPSETS EUROPEANS.

4. SEVERAL "24 HEURES" EDITORIALS EXPLAINED THAT EUROPEANS PREFER US TO TAKE MOST COSTLY DECISIONS ALONE, BUT SHOULD NOT EXPECT US SPEND MILLIONS TO DEVELOP WEAPON EUROPEANS MIGHT REJECT. BELIEVED SCHMIDT WAITED TOO LONG TO ACCEPT NB IN FRG. SAID AMERICANS DOUBT PRESIDENT HAS IRRETRIEVABLY LOST PRESTIGE IN EUROPE; SAID AMERICANS AND CONGRESS WOULD GIVE PRESIDENT BENEFIT OF DOUBT ON NEW SALT AGREEMENT. EDITORIAL STRESSED NEED FOR NB TO CORRECT CONVENTIONAL ARMS IMBALANCE WITH SOVIETS IN EUROPE. NEVERTHELESS, BELIEVED SOVIETS FELL BEHIND IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY AND OPTED FOR LARGE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. SAID SOVIETS ARE FACED WITH ALTERNATIVE ABANDON ADVANCED NB-TYPE TECHNOLOGY TO US OR ENGAGE IN LONG AND COSTLY UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BERN 01768 191243Z

CATCH-UP EFFORT. EDITORIAL ARGUED NB SHOULD REMAIN AS US DAMOCLES SWORD OR TRUMP CARD IN DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS WHILE CALMING SOVIET CONCERNS ABOUT US INTENTIONS.

5. "JOURNAL DE GENEVE" EDITORIAL ASKED READERS PUT THEMSELVES IN PRESIDENT'S PLACE. NB IS IMPORTANT FOR NATO DEFENSE BUT COULD HARM SALT II PROSPECTS WHICH IN US VIEW TAKES PRIORITY OVER BALANCE OF FORCES IN EUROPE. SECONDLY, US SHOULD NOT IMPOSE ITS WILL ON EUROPE, DESPITE APPARENT SUPPORT FROM FRG AND UK. PRESIDENT WANTS DEMOCRATIC DECISION BY ALL CONCERNED. MORE IMPORTANT, PRESIDENT DESIRES STIMULATE US AND EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION TO TAKE POSITION IN FAVOR NB PRODUCTION; THAT WOULD ENHANCE US BARGAINING POSITION WITH SOVIETS.

6. "BASLER ZEITUNG" EDITORIAL ACCEPTED ARGUMENTS THAT NB DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE OF QUESTIONABLE MILITARY AND POLITICAL ADVANTAGE BECAUSE IT WOULD LOWER NUCLEAR WAR THRESHOLD AND INCREASE MISTRUST. CONCLUDED NB MORATORIUM IS GOOD AND MERITS FULL SUPPORT OF ALL

COUNTRIES AS STEP TOWARD PEACE.

WARNER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT, PRESS COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION, NUCLEAR BOMBS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 apr 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978BERN01768  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780167-0664  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BERN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780442/aaaabiyk.tel  
**Line Count:** 118  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 30968bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 mar 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** N/A  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2924216  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SWISS PRESS ON PRESIDENT'S NEUTRON BOMB DECISION  
**TAGS:** MPOL, SZ  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/30968bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014